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BURIED RECORD OF WORK OF  
PENEFACTOR OF HOKKAIDO  
(GENERAL CAPRON) NOW  
UNEARTHED

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BURIED RECORD OF PIONEER WORK OF  
BENEFATOR OF HOKKAIDO  
NOW UNEARTHED;  
BIOGRAPHY COMPLETED BY SCHOLAR SINGLE HANDED  
AFTER FIFTEEN YEARS OF SILENT LABOR;  
AUTHOR DEPARTS ON WORLD TOUR  
LEAVING PRECIOUS WORK IN PUBLIC TRUST  
(The TOKYO ASAHI SHIMBUN, Saturday, Oct. 10, 1936, p.13)

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While the air of the Hokkaido was still ringing with shouts of joy of its inhabitants in celebration of their rare fortune of receiving the visiting Emperor, who came to review the military manoeuvre recently taking place in this distant northern region, a highly significant announcement was unexpectedly made about the timely completion of the elaborately worked out biography of a great, none the less long forgotten benefactor the Hokkaido was once in its history blessed with. The man immortalized in the book is no other than General Horace Capron, an American, who, in the early days of the Meiji era, performed with unusual success monumental pioneer work in his capacity as High Commissioner attached to the Hokkaido Development Bureau. Notwithstanding the lasting nature of the effects of his achievements, their record along with his name had strangely been consigned to utter oblivion for generations in this country; until rediscovered some years ago by mere chance

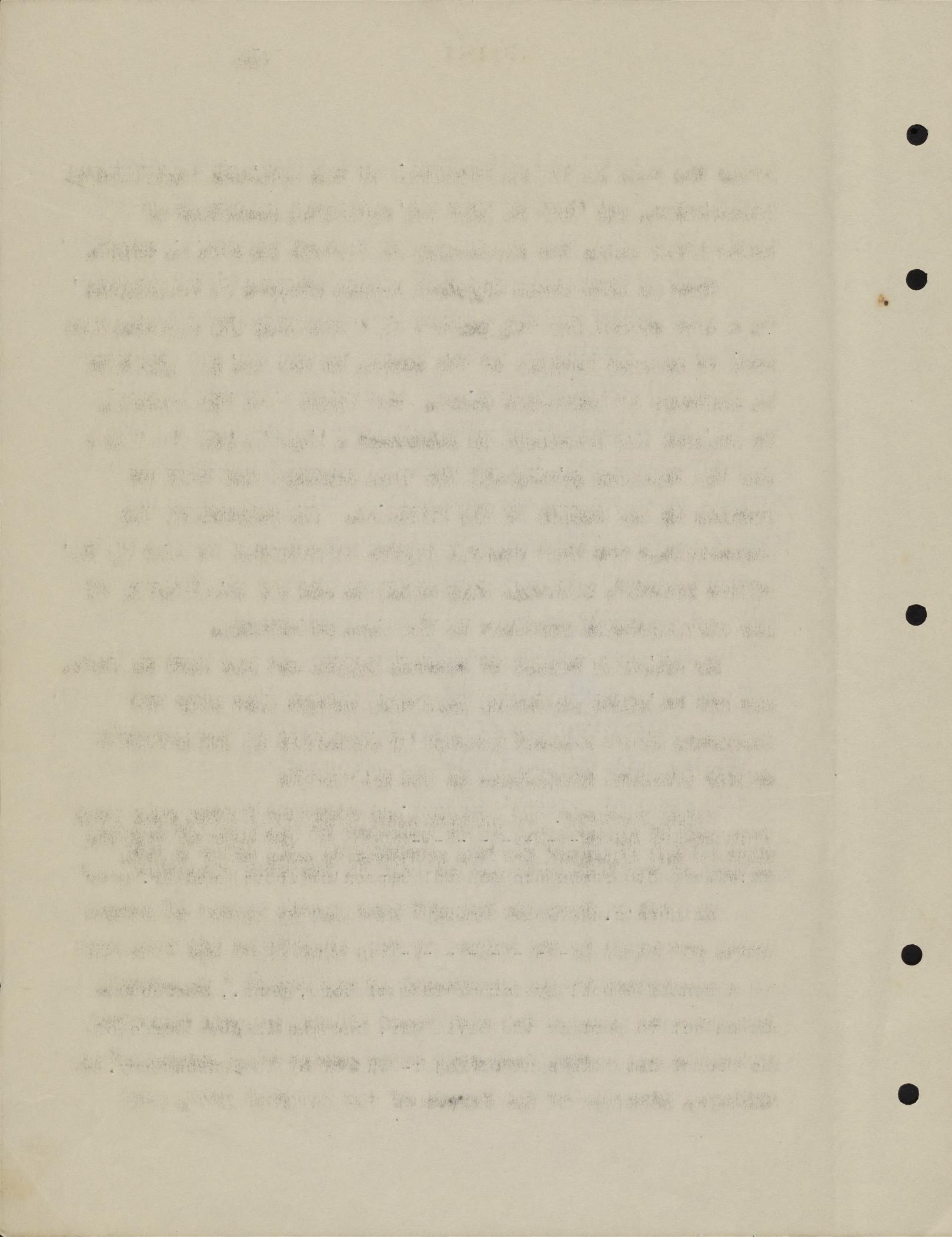
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by his present faithful biographer. The latter, Issa Tanimura by name, is an aged hidden scholar, being an alumnus of Cornell University and a bearer of the honorary degree of LL.D.(America). He has long been in the service of the Imperial Pasture at Nasu, and in this connection been conducting research work in the fields of the raising of sheep, cattle and horses, the selection of forage and other subjects. He is also an extensive world-trotter, doing while travelling his utmost, though in a modest and unadvertised way, in the cause of the furtherance of international understanding and good will. Giving the finishing touches to the CAPRON SHOGUN DENKI (Biography of General Capron), he is now planning to depart on another world tour, leaving behind as a memento to the public this precious product of his untiring pen, and closing his own laboratory and experimental farms, which, placed within the precincts of the Imperial Pasture, go by the collective name of "Soyo Yen" (Grass and Sheep Gardens), and for the building up of which he has spent the past twenty years in constant personal efforts.

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NOTE: The photographs are General Capron's (above) and Dr. Tanimura's.

A son of a wealthy farmer in Attleboro, Mass., Horace Capron took an active part in the Civil War, and was in due course of time promoted to the rank of Major-General of the Union Army.



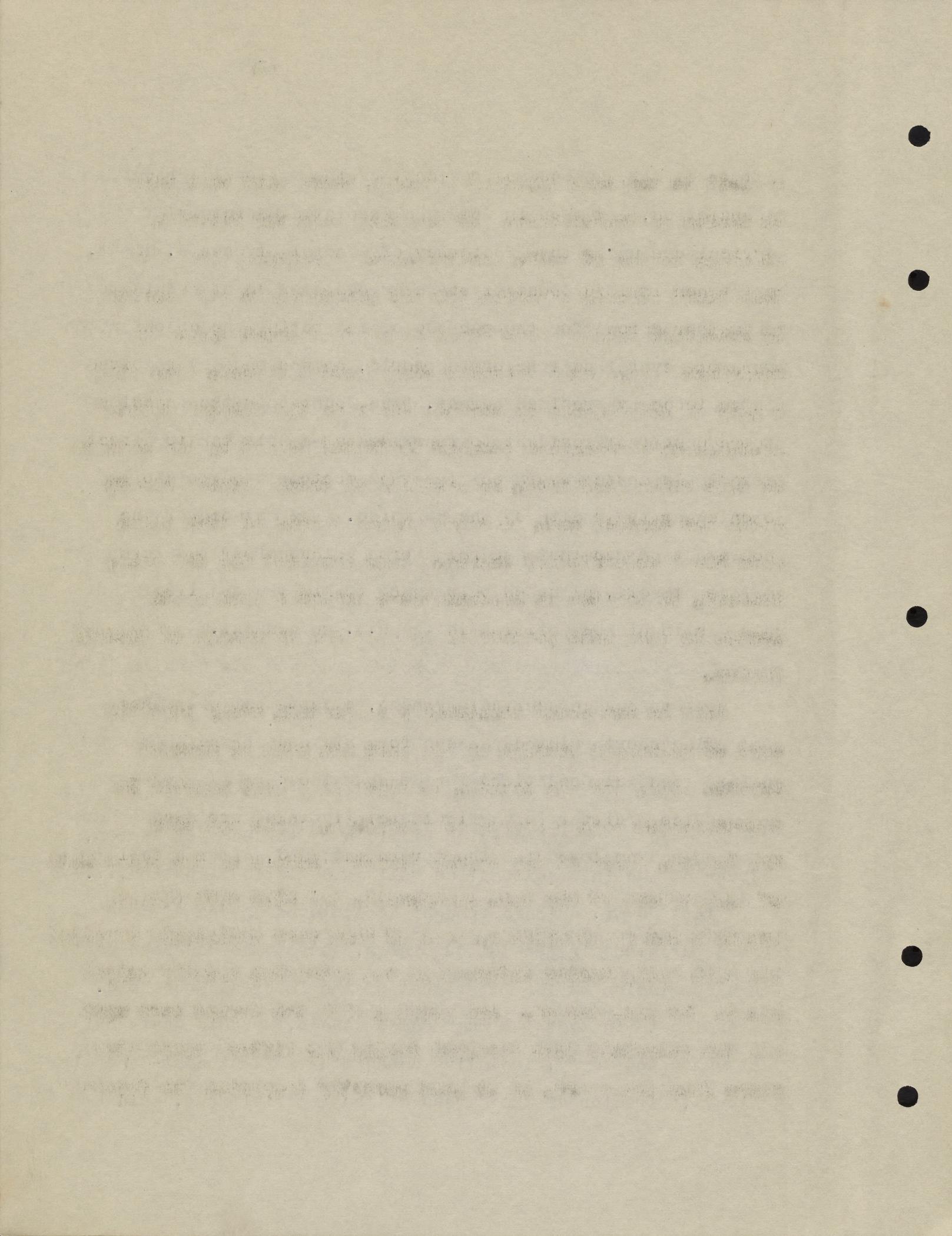
After the war, he became President of the National Agricultural Association, and then in 1867 was appointed Secretary of Agriculture under the Presidency of General Ulysses S. Grant.

When in 1870 Count Kiyotaka Kuroda stopped at Washington on a tour abroad for the purpose of inspecting the colonization work of several nations of the world, he was one day received in audience by President Grant. The Count took the occasion to request the President to recommend a capable man to direct for the Japanese government the then contemplated work of opening up the wealth of the Hokkaido. The outcome of the conversation was that General Capron volunteered to take up the office himself, although this meant to him the sacrificing of his distinguished position in the U.S. government.

No official record of General Capron and his work in Japan can now be found preserved anywhere, except that only the following short related passage is contained in the HOKKAIDO GAIKYO (General Conditions in the Hokkaido):

"Vice Minister (of Agriculture) Kiyotaka Kuroda came home from abroad accompanied by an American of the name of Capron, whom he had employed for the government; and, after a full survey of the international as well as domestic situation,..."

In 1920 Dr. Tanimura brought home eleven horses of Morgan breed purchased in the United States, whereto he had been sent on a commission by the Department of the Imperial Household. Intending to inspect the much famed steeds, Marquis Masayoshi Matsugata and party, including among others Lieutenant-General Shibuya, Director of the Bureau of the Imperial Mews, paid



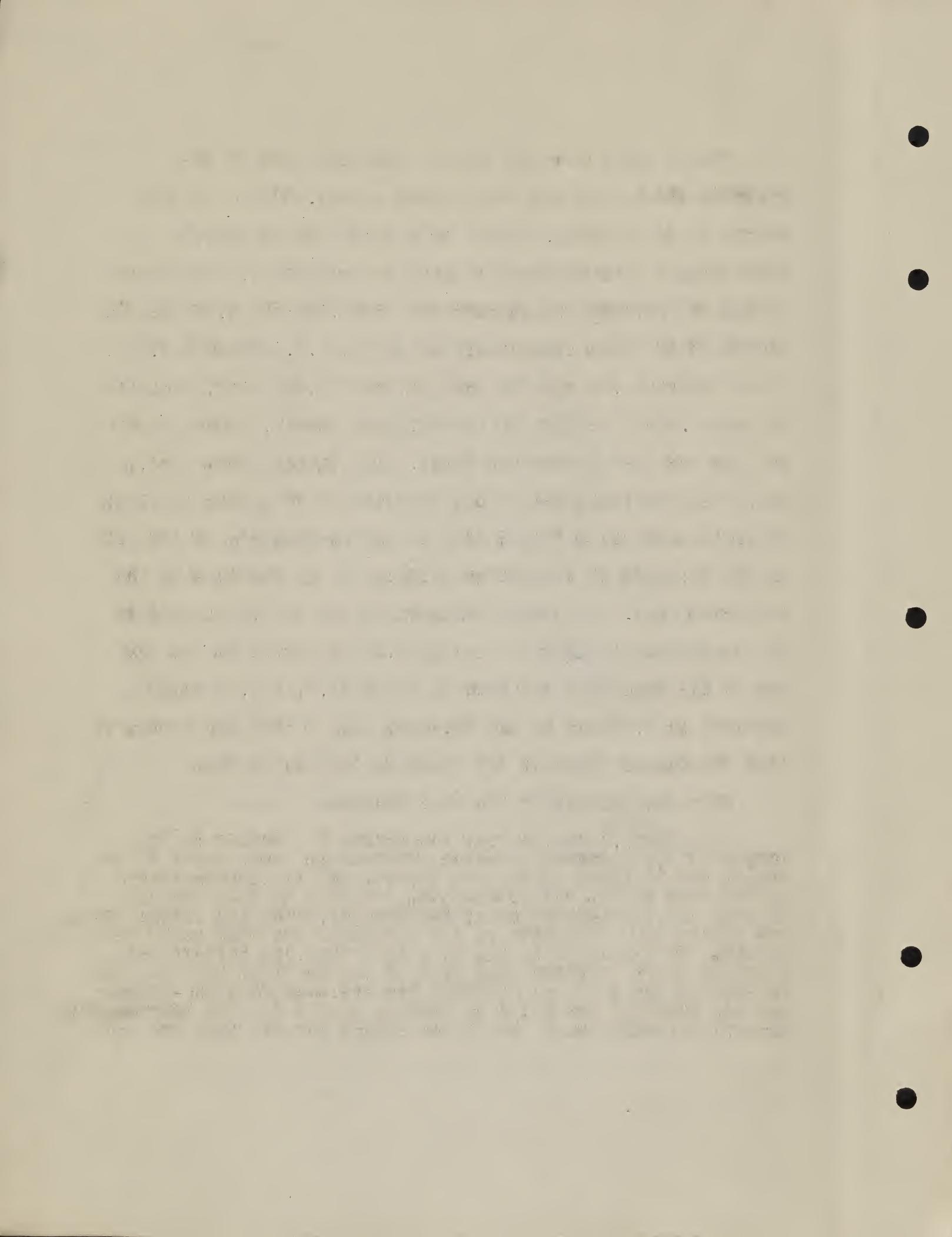
a visit to the Nasu Imperial Pasture, where they were kept in charge of Dr.Tanimura. It was then that the Marquis, pointing to one of them, inadvertently remarked: "Doesn't that horse closely resemble the one presented to our Emperor by President Grant?" Lieutenant-General Shibusawa spoke in response: "Yes, and I remember that General Capron, too, made a gift to His Majesty of another horse of the similar build." Dr.Tanimura's attention somehow instantly caught by the mention of this unfamiliar name, he demanded of those present who on earth the General was, to which question none of them could give him a satisfactory answer. This incident did not fail, however, to provoke in Dr.Tanimura's breast a passionate desire to come into possession of accurate knowledge of General Capron.

Soon he set about assiduously collecting every possible sort of materials bearing on the life and work of General Capron. And, for the matter, he especially kept himself in communication with a number of Americans, above all with Mr. Taylor, Chief of the Animal Industry Bureau of the Department of Agriculture of the U.S. government, and also with General Capron's own grandchildren, each of whom most obligingly supplied him with enlightening information and otherwise greatly helped him in the undertaking. And working with the utmost care upon all the materials thus obtained during the fifteen consecutive years from the start, he at last recently completed the General's



biography, which is now in the press waiting for the day of its publication to come along before long.

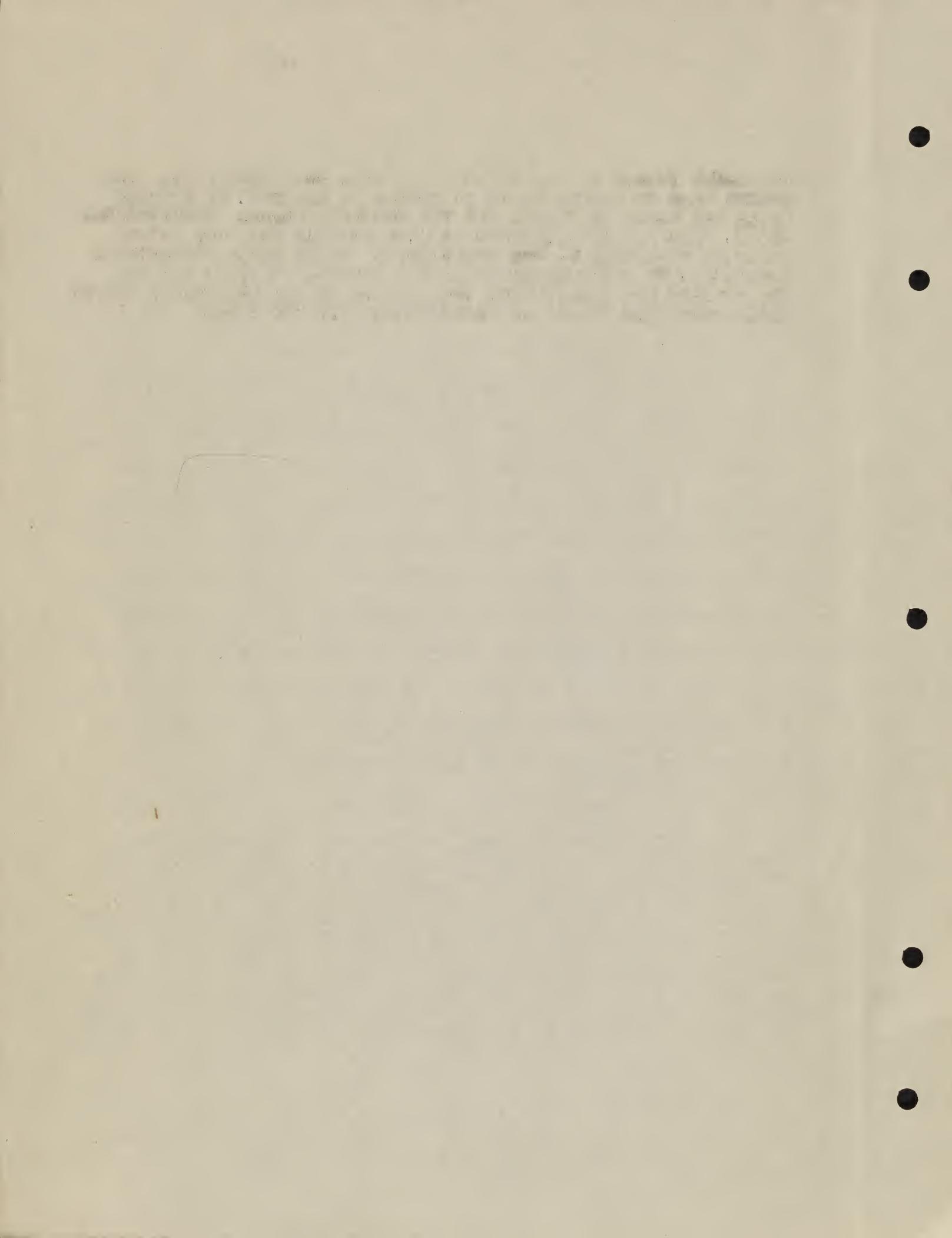
According to Dr. Tanimura's account in the book, General Capron came over to this country in August 1871, accompanied by his staff, comprising such men as Mr. Eldridge, Librarian of the Department of Agriculture of the U.S. government, Mr. Thomas Anticel, a chemical expert, and Mr. Warfield, a civil engineer. On the 16th of the following month, he was received in audience by the Emperor Meiji. Immediately afterward, the government established at his suggestion the country's first girls' school in the site of the Itokuin Temple on Shiba Hill in Tokyo; and the General himself taught in the institution for some time. The government went on further, following General Capron's continuous advice, to found in Shiba Park in Tokyo the Nogakko (Agricultural Academy), which, opened in January 1872, later turned out to be the forerunner of the Agricultural Department of the Hokkaido Imperial University; and in another locality in Tokyo the Joshi Shihan Gakko (Women's Normal School), which opened toward the end of 1872; and to lay out in Aoyama in Tokyo the first and second Kwanyen (government agricultural experimental stations), which consisted of farms and orchards covering an area of 100,000 tsubo (one tsubo roughly corresponds to six square feet); and in Azabu-Kogaicho in Tokyo and experimental pasture covering an area of 80,000 tsubo, which subsequently came to be known as the third Kwanyen.



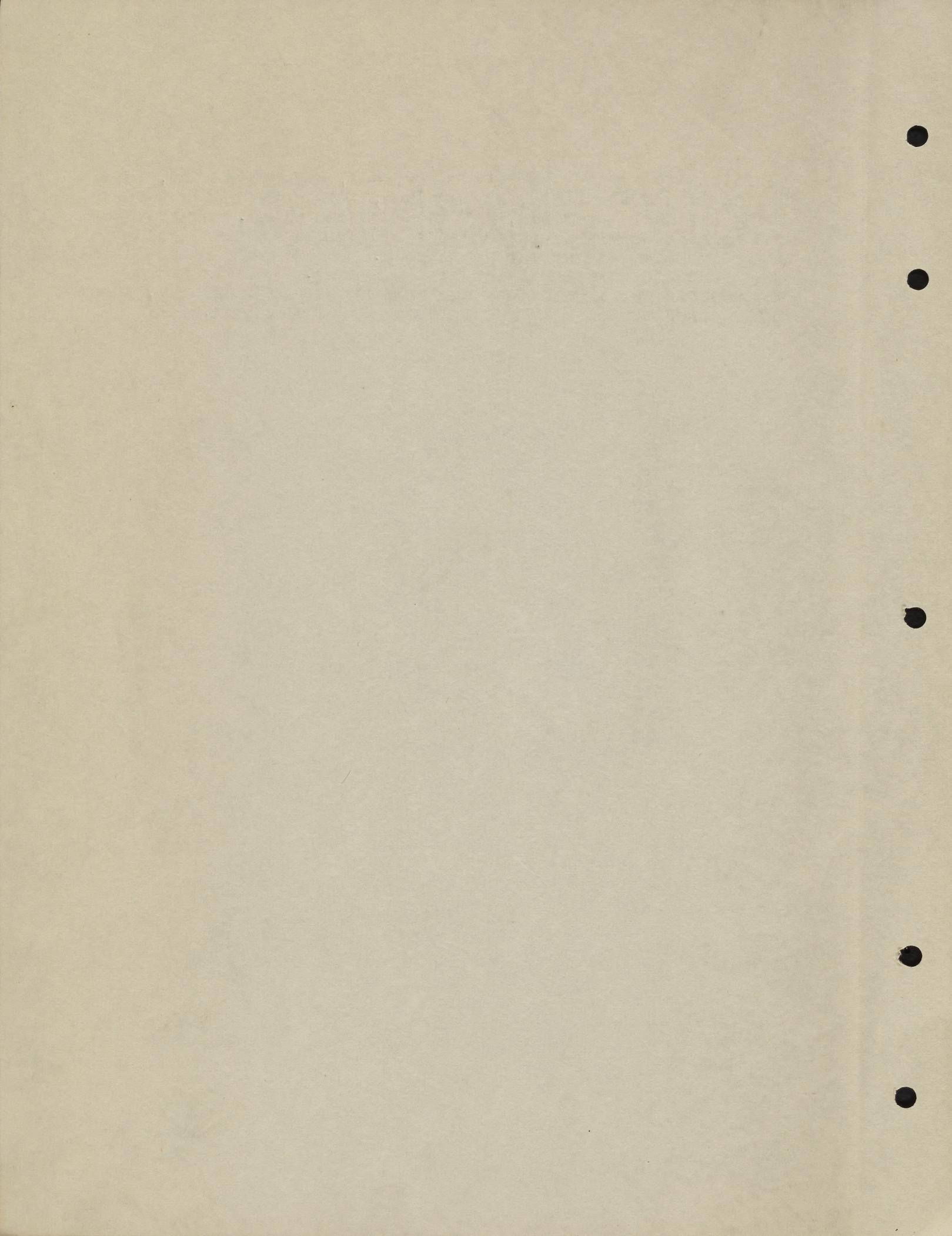
But it was precisely General Capron's work in the Hokkaido which deserves our highest commendation. On this score, be it summarily noted that, under his masterful direction, a long-distance highway between the two important cities of Hakodate and Sapporo was laid out; the canal of the length of 12 miles connecting the city of Sapporo with the River Ishikari dug up; the port of Muroran reconstructed; the Heronai Railway built; the Toyohiragawa Hydro-Electric Plant set up; and some lumber and flour mills inaugurated. Also, apart from devising many other instruments of public service, he especially had a direct hand in the preparation of the map of the Hokkaido on the modern scheme, in the founding of the Meteorological Observatory in Sapporo, and in the initiation of the system of colonial troops for the Hokkaido. On the eve of his departure for home in March 1875, he was again received in audience by the Emperor, and in 1875 was decorated with the Second Class of the Order of the Rising Sun.

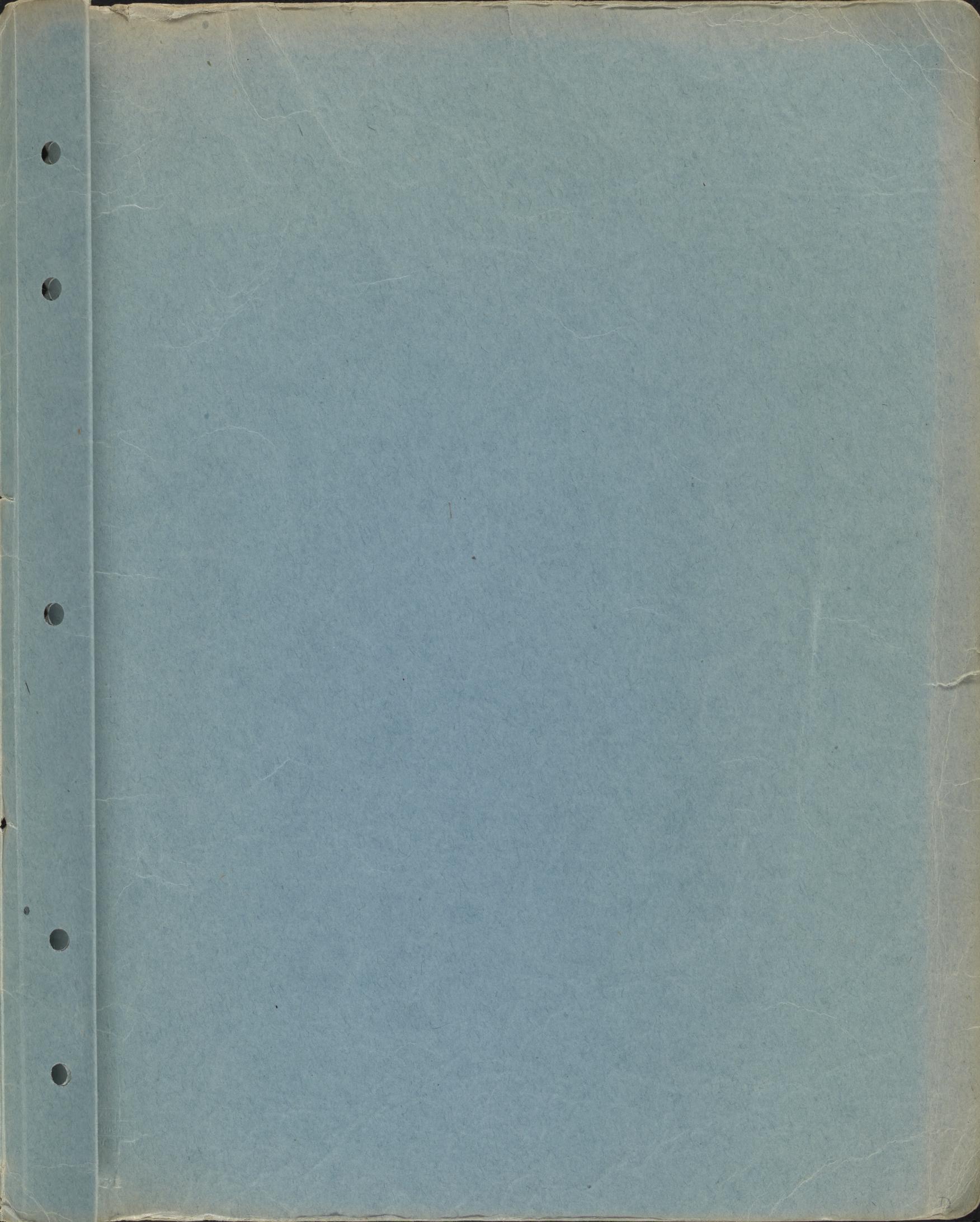
Says Dr. Tanimura to his interviewer:

"You of course know the monument standing in the campus of the Hokkaido Imperial University. But, mark! It is there, not in honor of General Capron, but in commemoration of the work of Dr. William Clarke, who came to this country through the recommendation by the General after his return home, and served the University as its President for only eight short months. Of course it is all very well that his meritorious services there received this form of recognition; but what can be said of the fact that nothing has yet been done to symbolize our profound gratitude to General Capron for his incomparably greater contributions? He it was indeed who not only was the



veritable father of the University, but, more than that, left behind huge foot-prints, so to speak, in the path of modernizing the whole of Japan, not the Hokkaido alone. Nevertheless the records of his achievements were fatally lost and became entirely forgotten by our countrymen. Hence their regrettable negligence to permanently honor his memory. This is one of the reasons why I undertook the writing of his biography, though fully conscious of all my shortcomings for the task."





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